DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 404 CG 006 546

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TITLE Inquiry Role Approach: A Model for Counselor Involvement in Learning.
INSTITUTION American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.; Mid-Continent Regional Educational Lab., Inc., Kansas City, Mo.
PUB DATE 6 Apr 71
NOTE 13p.; Speech given before American Personnel and Guidance Association Annual Convention (20th, Atlantic City, N.J., April 4-8, 1971)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment, *Classroom Guidance Programs, Counseling, Counseling Effectiveness, Counseling Programs, Counselor Functions, *Counselor Role, Educational Strategies, Group Behavior, *Group Dynamics, Group Experience, Groups, *High School Students, Learning Experience, Student Attitudes, Student Grouping, Student Opinion, Student Personnel Work, *Teacher Behavior, Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The Inquiry Role Approach (IRA) is a strategy for classroom learning in which students work as 4-member teams and assume roles as Team Coordinator, Process Advisor, Data Recorder, and Technical Advisor. Cognitive as well as affective objectives are identified which relate to optimum learning and personal growth in the classroom. The counselor's knowledge and skill are used in the IRA classroom to achieve affective behaviors related to objectivity, openness, self-directedness, curiosity, and respect for others. In this series of 5 brief papers, the IRA group work approach is explicated in various of its aspects: (1) the counselor and teacher's re-defined role; (2) students' new behaviors in a student-centered classroom; and (3) the advantages and disadvantages of this new learning strategy. The final paper includes numerous comments, both positive and negative, from students involved in the IRA. (TL)

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INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH: A MODEL FOR COUNSELOR INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING

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A special program presented at the national convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 6, 1971.

CG 006 546

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Introduction

During the past year, I have worked with the Inquiry Role Approach staff at the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory in Kansas City, Missouri, on questions of attitude measurement and counselor involvement in inquiry learning. The Inquiry Role Approach merits careful study by school counselors.

The Inquiry Role Approach (IRA) has been developed and field tested during the last three years in high school biology classrooms. Teacher's Manual and student Inquiry Guides have been developed.

IRA is a strategy for classroom learning in which students work as four-member teams and assume roles as Team Coordinator, Process Advisor, Data Recorder, and Technical Advisor. Cognitive as well as affective objectives have been identified which relate to optimum learning and personal growth in the classroom. The counselor's knowledge and skill are used in the IRA classroom to achieve affective behaviors related to objectivity, openness, self-directedness, curiosity, and respect for others.

Recent questions as to accountability of counselors to the total purpose of the school in affecting learning for all youngsters has stimulated counselors to study and implement ways of becoming directly involved with the teacher in classroom learning. The relationship of counselors and teachers in many schools is too often one of suspicion, disregard, jealousy and limited reliance. The Inquiry Role Approach is one means through which the counselor can provide specific help in the following areas:

1. Practical suggestions for classroom methods.
2. Participate in the classroom as group process observer and consultant.
3. Measurement of attitude change.
4. Identification of group team members.
5. Facilitate student understanding of peer feedback.
6. Assist the teacher in understanding his role in a student-centered classroom
7. Accept direct referrals from the teacher and work with them on learning related problems.

IRA provides a unique vehicle for school counselors to demonstrate their ability to function effectively outside of the confines of their enclosed offices. Can we do it?

Ronald Fredrickson

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH

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In order to re-define the counselor's role, it should be done as one looks at a learning situation that is much different from what is observed in the usual teacher-centered classroom. In the latter situation, one should expect the student:

1. To be assuming more responsibility for his own learning.
2. To be actively involved in the learning process.
3. To use knowledge rather than merely memorize it.
4. To engage his skills, interests, and attitudes as he interacts with a problem or issue.
5. To use social or interpersonal skills as well as information processing and reasoning skills.
6. To demonstrate the attitudes of openness, risk-taking, responsibility, and self-directedness.

One, in visiting this type of classroom, might find students demonstrating these more specific behaviors:

1. Asking another student reasons for his decision.
2. Supporting statements with evidence.
3. Challenging assumptions.
4. Changing one's point of view or position in view of new evidence.
5. Providing feedback to other students on their contributions or lack of them.
6. Demonstrates willingness to share knowledge.
7. Seeks clarification of another person's point of view.
8. Seeks and considers new evidence.

It is obvious that for these behaviors to occur, there should be a special type of learning climate in the classroom.

The Inquiry Role Approach is one alternative instructional methodology that is believed to provide the climate, opportunity, and the expectations for the above to occur. This program is under development at the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory and was the subject of a film produced last year by the Institute of Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A). The title of the film is: Learning Through Inquiry: In Search of Mount Everest (32 minute, 16mm color). For information on film rental write to:

I/D/E/A
Information and Services Division
P. O. Box 628
Far Hills Branch
Dayton, Ohio 45419

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH

HOW IT CAN AID THE COUNSELOR

By

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I. Provides an atmosphere in which the counselor can closely view her subjects.

A. Instead of 40 or 50 students in a group, there are only 4; thus the counselor has the opportunity to see each student contribute and react.

B. The shy student will tend to unwind a little with only 4 in his group, thus allowing the counselor to gain more insight into his personality and problems.

C. The problem student will show up more quickly in a small group situation and thus is more available for help.

D. The counselor can witness first-hand her students confronting new and challenging problems.

1. The McREL system itself is new to most students and requires a great amount of adaptation.
2. Those students who have problems relating to changing situations can be quickly spotted and helped.

E. Students with a low frustration tolerance are brought to the counselor's attention.

1. A lazy group member, clashing personalities - these and other problems can make group work difficult.
2. Students who become easily frustrated will not function well in such a situation and the counselor will be on hand to spot this and offer her help.

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH
HOW IT CAN AID THE COUNSELOR by Betty Nickel

II. Group feedback will enable the counselor to pinpoint problems she was not able to find by herself.

A. At various times during the year the group members evaluate themselves and their three teammates.

B. <u>If this is done honestly</u>, it can provide the counselor with invaluable data to work with.

III. Group work,in a sense, can alleviate some of the work of the counselor.

A. The bossy, domineering student must tone down if the group is to succeed.

B. The unco-operative student must tackle his share of the work or the group will fail.

C. The irresponsible student must begin to think for himself, or once again, the group will fail.

D. The intelligent student must often answer questions and explain difficult material - in this way he learns more thoroughly while at the same time, the other members of his group also gain more knowledge.

E. Often a student feels he is useless to the class and withdraws.
1. In his group, however, he is assigned a role.
2. Knowing now he is vital to the group's success, he begins to participate and thus to learn.

F. Many times a student feels weak in a particular subject and refuses to try.
1. Generally, group work is more fruitful than individual work, and the student sees his group is progressing.
2. He, thus has more confidence in himself and increases his efforts.

G. The bored student generally disappears.
1. If a group has quickly covered a certain lesson, they are encouraged to dig deeper through experimentation or research.

Thus, the McREL System allows the counselor to view her students more closely, to gain more information about them, and, finally, to begin helping them to help themselves.

TEACHER AND COUNSELOR WORK TOGETHER IN THE INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH

By

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I. Teacher's Role in IRA

A. Teachers should guide, not dictate students.
   1. Teachers should guide students along with constructive criticism; provide proper learning materials; examine learning difficulties in students.

B. Teacher Preparation
   1. Talk with counselor about any problems she might have in learning to give up authority.
   2. Consult counselor on any student-teacher problems.
   3. Establish a rapport with students.

II. Counselor's Role in IRA

A. Counselor should establish rapport with student.
   1. Counselor should visit classrooms and watch learning experiences first hand.
   2. Have regular counseling sessions with students to solve any difficulties.
   3. Relate with students on how the IRA has had an effect on their home environment.

B. Counselor should help teachers with any problems.
   1. Counselor should consult teacher with any problems concerning their work with students.
   2. Helping teachers to give up domineering role.

C. Counselor and Teacher.
   1. Counselor and teacher should work together in helping to channel any leadership ability.
   2. They should note any changes in
      (a) Personality changes (introvert-extrovert)
      (b) Work habits (more or less student involvement)
      (c) Students role in his home environment
      (d) Change in student's sense of communication.

D. Advantages and Disadvantages
   1. Disadvantages - Group conflict (personality clashes)
      Student Absenteeism
   2. Advantages (develops leadership qualities)
      (introvert becomes extrovert)
      (able to communicate well)

TEACHER AND COUNSELOR WORK TOGETHER
IN THE INQUIRY ROLE APPROACH by Judy McArn

III. Film Situation

A. Example of how students learn to accept criticism.
   1. Listens with active interest Students rate themselves and learn their strengths and weaknesses.
   2. They accept these criticisms and try to develop their strengths and weak spots so that next time they will receive higher rating.

COUNSELOR INVOLVEMENT IN CLASSROOM LEARNING: A NEW ROLE

Sr. Barbara Marx*

As the last speaker on this panel, I will begin by stating the specific purpose of my paper. Rather than, how do I fit into the IRA program, I want to explain how IRA has helped me in the fulfillment of my task as guidance director.

Increasingly, throughout recent years, I had felt as if I were neglecting so many students, so many teachers. My time was well-spent. My clients were kids with real problems--drug users or friends of such, unwed mothers, loners, habitual absentees or truants. They needed help. But the slow learners who were getting F's, the new students who needed help in fitting in, and the average students with "normal" peer problems were left to fend for themsleves, more or less. Teachers were beginning to leave notes in my mailbox, "I can never get in to see you and I'm really concerned about Bryan in my Basic Comp Class." The curriculum director felt that I could contribute something in his department. Many challenging areas ---

IRA didn't solve all these problems. Formation of groups, invention of a crisis room, and practicum students from a neighboring college helped tremendously with the more "serious" cases. But IRA had much to offer in the other areas.

I began by attending a meeting with our biology teachers, our curriculum supervisor, and the personnel from McREL. Their ideas and ideals were discussed and I was asked to observe, to listen, to interview, and to advise. My first step was to spend an hour or two a week in the classroom. What a change to walk into a happy

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room where the teacher is walking around from group to group encouraging, admonishing, challenging; where students are questioning, weighing, smiling; where discussion, written work, and lab work are all included in the final evaluation. Right there, many potential clients achieve attention and success from teacher and peers. They don't need me.

Then I talked with students, asked them about the class. It was much easier to talk to them after I had spent some time in <u>their</u> classroom with <u>their</u> teacher.

Some comments from the slow students were especially encouraging.

Mike said, "I'm really going to pass this course! My papers aren't all D's and F's like in my other classes. The kids help me. Some of them can read faster than me, so I learn a lot by listening to them. I like to have a special job. When I get my work done, the kids like me and want me on their team."

Danny said, "Everybody has to take part in order to get a job done, but sometimes I would like to work alone and not be in a group because some of the people in my group annoy me to the point where I cannot work."

Lisa added, "I learned that I can contribute something and I was never able to give my feelings before in anything I did."

Tom made a practical observation. "I don't like it when people get mad at me so I do my work so they don't get mad."

"I learned that I'm lazy but the rest of the group tells me when I'm not doing my share," said Julie.

Kerry is against group work, especially evaluation. "If you try to do your job and try to make other people do their job, you make quick enemies."

The accelerated students were not quite as excited about the program as average and slow students, but they became aware of traits in themselves.

Bob said, "I feel the group structure is impairing my learning. Most of the students in these groups don't get anything done and one person usually ends up doing all the work because he cares about his grade."

"People, I hope, can depend on me and I on them," said Gary.

"It is the only class that I have that I won't fall asleep in. (I mean it seriously.)," said Jim.

"I resent it when the group gets a bad grade, and I feel I have put out a good effort on it, but I'm probably responsible for just as many bad group grades as anyone else," offers Steve.

"The inquiry guides are boring," complained Dan.

"On the average my group makes lower grades than I could alone," added Kevin.

"It's a chance for more original research and study, but if you get in a group that doesn't want to do anything, you've got a problem," says Joe.

All the students were learning something about responsibility, about making decisions, about evaluating and being evaluated. It was no longer me + biology + teacher = my grade. It was me + biology + teacher + group = grade in biology and image of self. "What am I like? How do others see me?"

Denise said, "I've found unless I have a good teacher I don't work to expand my thinking. I'm ashamed that I don't try harder, but I need encouragement. When I must evaluate myself, I find I am truthful when no one I know sees it."

Roger lamented, "The groups see me as a stuck-up, intellectual snob. I don't think I am but that's unimportant. I must present a better picture of myself toward my classmates."

Nina said, "I've learned a lot about being responsible for my job and then helping the others in the group with their job. You really have to get involved in the other people's jobs, too, to understand and help them with their problems."

Malcolm concluded, "I must put out more in the group so others will see me as a good team member that is able to contribute to the group. Evaluating myself and others is the hardest part of group work."

Debbie said, "I have become more aware of people. I am more open and feel more at ease with my classmates."

Laurie commented, "I've learned that it takes a little extra effort to work in groups but the fun is worth it. It's more fun to pool ideas than to sit there and try to figure it out yourself."

Mary said, "I've learned mainly how to understand and compromise with individuals by letting them express their opinions openly. Also, that some people are very self-centered or selfish in their attitudes toward work, as well as humans."

Julie added a new thought. "I've learned how to carry a burden and stay happy and how to work with other people whom I don't like."

Linda is encouraged. "I've learned about myself on working as a group that I've become more self-confident because sometimes we use some of my answers and that reassures me that I know what I'm doing and I'm on the right track."

Mitch tackled the problem of evaluation. "I feel more free when I have to evaluate others. I used to be kind of scared when I did it. I didn't want to say anything bad about them. But now it's a lot easier for me."

"I talk too much," said Betsy, "and usually lead rather than follow and I don't like to tell others what they're doing wrong in the group. One problem I found (among others) is that I can never write down a brief answer. I always have to write down a whole lot."

"Some people are sensitive to criticism and others can take criticism and make something out of their mistakes," said Mark.

Jan added, "I am more critical of myself than of others. I have learned to take criticism better."

Marcia observed, "I have learned that I am an aggressive person. Something that if controlled can be very beneficial to my personality. If not, it is fatal."

Having learned much from the students, I moved to working with the teachers. First of all, I could pass on to them the comments that might help the groups run more efficiently.

Denise had this to say about her group in the third quarter of school. "Lots of kids prefer working with friends at this time of year. They don't have to compete for attention, for a place in the group. They can concentrate on learning, on their specific group project, on competing with other groups. Evaluation is hard, though."

Many students wanted more lab work. They were bored with so many inquiry guides. Teachers could then talk to the entire class and perhaps change their lesson plans somewhat.

In turn for this help, teachers made referrals to our office of students we could help and would not have known about otherwise. In one case, no group would take Margaret as a part of their team. They all thought she was too bossy and told her so openly. They just didn't want her. We began working with her individually. Two years later she is still bossy, but she does have some friends now.

Bob went through half a year without saying anything. Any written work he would do and could do sufficiently well, but no oral contributions. In working with him we found that he was very self-conscious about a lisp. Time and talking helped very much.

These are just a few examples and comments. I have not been able to work as closely with the students and biology teachers as I had hoped, but I feel that good things are happening. Any change in curriculum that emphasizes personality growth and development, as well as content, is welcome. Any method that takes the counselor into the classroom and the teacher into the guidance office has to result in better things for the student. I feel much better about the entire guidance program because more students are being reached and teachers are asking for assistance in a new dimension of their role--a resource person dealing with thoughts and feelings in growing human beings. Perhaps counselor-trainers need to look at this role and prepare their students for spending a part of each day in this way. It's worth the time.